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ever, as we have already hinted, many of the plates are gems in their way, and are of themselves worth all the money charged for the volume in which they appear. We have likewise made an exception in favour of the poetry, which, speaking generally, we deem superior to that which appeared in the last year's *Annals*; and of which we shall afford our readers an opportunity of judging.

FRIENDSHIP'S OFFERING.

"Constance," the frontispiece to this elegant little volume, engraved by W. H. Egleton, from a painting of the original portrait by H. Hawkins, is as much to our taste as any we have seen in any of the *Annals* of the present year; and the credit of the artists regularly engaged for this work is well supported by several other pieces of considerable merit. "The Evening Hymn" is finely conceived, and finely executed; and in the accompanying verses there is a touch of genuine poetry.

THE EVENING HYMN.

By Thomas Miller.

How many days, with mute adieu,
Have gone down yon untrodden sky!
And still it looks as clear and blue
As when it first was hung on high.
The rolling sun, the frowning cloud
That drew the lightning in its rear,
The thunder, tramping deep and loud,
Have left no foot-mark there.

The village bells, with silver chime,
Come softened by the distant shore;
Though I have heard them many a time,
They never rung so sweet before.

A silence rests upon the hill,
A listening awe pervades the air;
The very flowers are shut, and still,
And bowed as if in prayer.

And in this hushed and breathless close,
O'er earth, and air, and sky, and sea,
That still low voice in silence goes,
Which speaks alone, great God! of Thee.

The whispering leaves, the far-off brook,
The linnet's warble fainter grown,
The hive-bound bee, the lonely rook—
All these their Maker own.

Now shine the starry hosts of light,
Gazing on earth with golden eyes;
Bright guardians of the blue-browed night!
What are ye in your native skies?

I know not! neither can I know,
Nor on what leader ye attend,
Nor whence ye came, nor whither go,
Nor what your aim or end.

I know they must be holy things,
That from a roof so sacred shine,
Where sounds the beat of angel wings,
And footsteps echo all Divine.

Their mysteries I never sought,
Nor hearkened to what Science tells,
For, oh! in childhood I was taught,
That God amidst them dwells.

The darkening woods, the fading trees,
The grasshopper's last feeble sound,
The flowers just awakened by the breeze,
All leave the stillness more profound.

The twilight takes a deeper shade,
The dusky pathways blacker grow,
And silence reigns in glen and glade—
All, all is mute below.

And other eves as sweet as this
Will close upon as calm a day,
And, sinking down the deep abyss
Will, like the last, be swept away;
Until eternity is gained,
That boundless sea without a shore,
That without time for ever reigned,
And will when time's no more.

Now Nature sinks in soft repose,
A living semblance of the grave;
The dew steals noiseless on the rose,
The boughs have almost ceased to wave;
The silent sky, the sleeping earth,
Tree, mountain, stream, the humble sod,
All tell from whom they had their birth,
And cry, "Behold a God!"

We have only room for another extract from this volume:

I ONCE HAD FRIENDS.

By the Author of "Chartley," "The Invisible Gentleman," &c.

I once had friends—a thousand friends! and I might have them yet,
But, now, I have a *chosen few*, whom I can ne'er forget.
The thousand—let them go and come—like swallows to the lake,
But the few—to lose the chosen few—methinks my heart would break!

'Tis not the kindred tie of blood, though much in that there be;
'Tis warmth of heart and flow of soul that bind those few to me:
The converse sweet of "auld lang syne," is memory's delight,
And joyous hope to meet again still makes the future bright.

What are to me the crowded halls of fashion, wealth, or power,
Whose greatest praise is briefly scanned—to "kill" the passing hour!

The passing hour, whose heavy tread bears down the listless train,

Who fly from solitude with hope—yet ever hope in vain.

If thou hast friends—a thousand friends, by wealth or rank endowed,

And meet'st with smiles amid the gay and fashionable crowd,
Rate at its worth the practised phrase which all to each impart;
But, oh! enshrine the *chosen few*—deep in thine inmost heart.

MEETINGS OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

LOW STATE OF EDUCATION IN ENGLAND.

On Tuesday the Statistical Section room was crowded, in consequence of its being known that a report would be presented on the question of Education. Mr. Langton, of Manchester, read a report on the state of education in that town. He stated, that at a meeting of the Statistical Society, on the 23d April, 1854, a committee was appointed to examine into the state of the Day, Sunday, Charity, and Infant Schools in the borough of Manchester, and to report on the number of children contained in them, and the nature and efficacy of the instruction there received.

The following statement will show that the management of the schools in some parts of England is a good deal upon the Irish plan; at all events, we should suppose the masters to be Irish. The report, after stating that the Dame Schools are generally found in dirty unwholesome rooms, damp cellars, or dilapidated garrets, observes that—

"One of the best of these schools is kept by a blind man, who hears his scholars their lessons, and explains them with great simplicity; he is, however, liable to interruption in his academic labours, as his wife keeps a mangle, and he is obliged to turn it for her."

The state of the Common Day Schools is even worse:

"The masters themselves have generally a better opinion of their own qualifications for their office. One of them observed, during a visit paid to his school, that there were too many schools to do any good, adding, 'I wish government would pass a law, that nobody but *them as is high learnt* should keep school, and then *we* might stand a chance to do some good.'

"Most of the masters and mistresses of these schools, seemed to be strongly impressed with the superiority of their own plans to those of any other school, and were very little inclined to listen to any suggestions respecting improvements in the system of education that had been made in other places.—'The old road is the best,' they would sometimes say. One master stated, that he had adopted a system which he thought would at once supply the great desiderata in education—'it is simply,' he said, 'in watching the dispositions of the children, and putting them especially to that particular thing which they take

to.' In illustration of this system, he called upon a boy about ten years of age, who had *taken* to Hebrew, and was just beginning to learn it; the master acknowledging that he himself was learning too, in order to teach his pupil. On being asked whether he did not now and then find a few who did not *take* to anything, he acknowledged that it was so; and this, he said, was the only weak point in his system, as he feared that he should not be able to make much of those children.

"One of these masters, who was especially conscious of the superior excellence of his establishment, as soon as he was acquainted with the object of the visit, began to dilate upon the various sciences with which he was familiar; among which he enumerated Hydraulics, Hydrostatics, Geography, Geology, Etymology, and Entomology. It was suggested to him that they had better, perhaps, take the list of queries in their order. On coming to the subjects taught in the school, he was asked—Do you teach Reading and Writing?—Yes! Arithmetic?—Yes! Grammar and Composition?—Certainly! French?—Yes! Latin?—Yes! Greek?—Yes, yes! Geography?—Yes. &c; and so on, till the list of queries was exhausted, answering every question in the affirmative. As he concluded, the visitor remarked, 'This is *multum in parvo* indeed,' to which the master immediately replied, 'Yes, I teach that; you may put that down too.'

"In one of the seminaries of learning, where there were about 150 children, the noise and confusion was so great, as to render the replies of the master to the inquiries put to him, totally inaudible; he made several attempts to obtain silence, but without effect; at length, as a last effort, he ascended his desk, and striking it forcibly with a ruler, said, in a strong Hibernian accent, 'I'll tell you what it is, boys, the first I hear make a noise, I'll call him up, and kill him entirely;' and then perceiving probably on the countenance of his visitor some expression of dismay at this murderous threat, he added quickly, in a more subdued tone, 'almost I will.' His menace produced no more effect than his previous appeals had done. A dead silence succeeded for a minute or two; then the whispering recommenced, and the talking, shuffling of feet, and general disturbance was soon as bad as ever. The master gave up the point, saying, as he descended from his desk, 'You see, the brutes, there's no managing them!'

"The Committee met with two instances of schools kept by masters of some abilities, but much given to drinking, who had, however, gained such a reputation in their neighbourhood, that after spending a week or fortnight in this pastime, they could always fill their school-rooms again as soon as they returned to their post. The children, during the absence of the masters, go to other schools for the week, or play in the streets, or are employed by their parents in running errands, &c. On another occasion, one of these instructors and guardians of the morals of our youth, was met issuing from his school-room, at the head of his scholars, to see a *fight* in the neighbourhood; and, instead of stopping to reply to any educational queries, only uttered a breathless invitation to come along and see the sport."

CO-OPERATIVE SHOPS.

On Wednesday, in the Statistical Section, Mr. Babbage, in accordance with the desire expressed by the Committee, gave his views in reference to the influence of co-operative shops for the sale of necessaries to workmen. He produced to the Section the causes which had been deduced from the observations. These co-operative shops were of two kinds:—1st. Those in which the workmen purchased goods at the wholesale price, and retailed them to their families. In this plan the workmen appropriated to themselves the profit of the retail dealer. 2d. Those in which the master kept the shop, and the workmen purchased from him. With the latter branch of the case he did not intend to deal at present, but his opinion was hostile to the formation of shops by masters. A few years ago he had access to the concern of Mr. Anthony Strutt, at Derby, and there he found a co-operative shop had been carried on, from the details of which, conclusions, founded on facts, might be drawn. This shop was approved of by the masters, and nothing

was wanting to give a fair trial to the experiment. The first requisite was to supply the shop with goods. This was accomplished by the master's guaranteeing the payments to the wholesale dealers at three months' credit, and deducting the amount out of the wages due to the workmen at the end of that time. A committee of workmen for buying and selling was formed, and the usual articles of consumption were procured. The rate of profit on the goods varied from 10 to 80 per cent. The number of workmen dealing in the shop at first, and who were of course admitted to share in the profits, in proportion to the extent of the goods they purchased, was largest at the commencement, and then gradually declined. The amount sold was at its *maximum* the second year, and then gradually diminished, until at the expiration of fourteen years the shop was closed up. He (Mr. Babbage) inquired what were the causes of this failure, and on being informed of them, they appeared sufficiently valid. The committee of workmen commissioned to purchase, although good judges in their usual mechanical departments, showed no equal ability in purchasing bacon, flour, meal, &c. and the regular dealer was of course always able to make a better purchase. If they endeavoured to acquire skill in buying such articles, their attention was distracted from the proper and more profitable avocations. The next cause of failure, and the most important, was the demoralizing effect produced on some members of the Committee. Coming in contact with those who sold wholesale, it was natural that little favours should be conferred upon them to secure their custom, and thus men got corrupted. The practice in this respect became so notorious, that a significant word was used to denote it—it was called "greasing." Books were kept at the shop, in which the amount purchased at each time by each customer was entered. The wives and children of the workmen made their little purchases at the shop, but no money passed between the parties, and only the balance of the wages due to them came into their hands, the larger portions of course being paid to the shop on their respective accounts. Some inconvenience arose from the want of a circulating medium. A child who by its industry used occasionally to bring to its parents, on the Saturday night, a few pence more than its average earnings, would sometimes take that opportunity to petition for a small part of the surplus for some innocent gratification, and the indulgence acted as a stimulant on its future industry: but when its gains were merely entered in a book to the credit of the parents, no opportunity was offered for such requests, and additional industry became less apparently rewarded. Mr. Babbage concluded by stating, that the result of this experiment, made with most benevolent views, assisted but not governed by the proprietors of the factory, and carried on by the workmen themselves for a long period of years, induced him to believe that there were very few circumstances in which such establishments were favourable to the interests of the workmen. He wished, however, that the very imperfect sketch he had given might induce other gentlemen to collect facts on a subject of the greatest importance to the happiness of the working classes.

Several members joined with Mr. Babbage in the view he had taken, and instanced various cases where the plan had been adopted and failed. One case alone had been adverted to, Plymouth, where a shop for the purchase of bread by the workmen continued to flourish; but this was attributed to the superintendence of some officers in the management. Another reason assigned was, that the value and quality of the materials for bread were well known, and did not require much experience.

Dr. Orpen concurred in the objections made to co-operative shops, and observed that every man should take care of himself.

Mr. Babbage stated that the view of the case suggested by the last speaker, reminded him of one remark which he had omitted to make. The persons buying at these co-operative shops took the goods without examination of their quality, conceiving that no necessity existed for such examination; and when they came afterwards to purchase elsewhere, they were deficient in caution in making a judicious and favourable selection of whatever articles they required.